

# Understanding a Hepatitis C Diagnosis



Hepatitis C can affect anyone and effective treatment is available.

## What does my test result mean?

We check for hepatitis C with a blood test. If the virus is found in your body, you have an **active infection that needs treatment**.

## How does hepatitis C spread?

Hepatitis C spreads through **blood-to-blood contact**. This can happen by:

- Sharing any drug equipment (needles, syringes, pipes, or straws)
- Needlestick injuries
- Sex without protection
- A mother passing the virus to her baby during birth
- Sharing personal items like razors, toothbrushes, nail clippers, or needles

It is **not** spread through breastfeeding, sharing utensils, holding hands, hugging, or kissing.

## What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a virus that harms the liver. Many people with hepatitis C do not feel sick or have symptoms. The virus stays in the body if it is not treated. This is called **chronic hepatitis C**.

Over time, hepatitis C can damage the liver. About 1 out of 4 people with chronic hepatitis C may develop **cirrhosis**, which is a serious liver disease. It also increases the risk of liver cancer.

## How is hepatitis C treated?

Most people take pills once a day for 8–12 weeks. These medicines help remove the virus from your body. Taking your medicine exactly as prescribed is very important.

**More than 9 out of 10 people are cured with treatment.** Treatment can stop liver damage and help you stay healthy.

## What's next?

**Your care team will help you plan treatment.** You should:

- Go to all follow-up appointments
- Call your care team if you have nausea, vomiting, belly pain, or a bad headache during treatment

Hepatitis C can be **cured**, but it can be caught again. Talk to your health care provider about how to prevent it.



**HEPATITIS C**  
Training Program

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